

**2023 ICPA Federal Conference
South Australia State Council President's Report**

Belinda Hatcher

Madame President, Federal councillors, ICPA members and guests, it gives me great pleasure to present my second President's report for South Australia's ICPA. Unfortunately our shearing seems to always be on at the same time as Federal Conference and I am disappointed I am unable to be there in person. I hope this PowerPoint with my voice photos of our members and their lives will suffice for this year. I have no doubt that Darwin is turning on some beautiful weather for you all and that it will be a successful and engaging couple of days.

The last half of 2022 saw SA ICPA State Councillors attend a delegation in Adelaide. We had meetings with several stakeholders from the Department for Education, other government departments as well as the Minister for Education. The key areas for discussion was equitable access to online NAPLAN, a state funded DETA type allowance, the consideration for a new and standalone Port Augusta SOTA school site and better service provision for new mothers and infants in remote South Australia. All the meetings we had seemed productive and well received and we walked away feeling confident that our voices were heard and members issues and motions were genuinely being considered. It is always a privilege to be able to give our time to represent and advocate on behalf of SA ICPA members and this privilege is never taken lightly.

On our way home and less than 24 hours after our visit with the Minister we received a document from his office that addressed all the motion letters that were sent to him. The proposed suggestions and solutions to the issues he raised were far from we were hoping for and even though we appreciated the speed at which he responded, we could only think that the small amount of time he and the Labour party had been in office for perhaps contributed to his near sightedness. SA ICPA are working towards better communication and connection with the Minister, his office and the department in the hope that we are able to bring about outcomes that are closer to the requests from our members.

Christmas and New Year seemed to come and go without too much fuss and it was soon time for families to embrace what 2023 was about to throw at them. I am sure that the first days, the last first days and everything in between was full of excitement, bittersweetness and maybe even the odd tear or two as our students started the year and their educational journey for 2023. For us personally, it was the first time in 12 years that we have had only one student at school and the first time in six, loading up the car ready to head back to boarding school with only one child's belongings. No matter what was instore for our young members and their families, I did then and still do now wish them all the very best. No matter where they are or how they are going about it, the education of our children is challenging and the huge effort put in by all involved in commendable.

In February this year Hollie and I travelled to be part of joint State Council and Federal Council catch up in Melbourne. The opportunity to meet our peers from other states is always a special one and after the meeting we both came away with renewed enthusiasm and ideas on how best to support our members' needs and with some fresh new ideas for SA ICPA State Council. Whilst there may be differences in council make-ups, membership numbers and member needs, it is the collective passion of all councillors across the country at every level that makes ICPA such a powerful organisation. To know I have played just a small part in this big family is one of the reasons why I am (and I think why so many others are as well) so inspired to be involved.

While still on the topic of Federal Council, I would like to offer gratitude for and acknowledgement of Alana Moller on her stellar four years as Federal President. Leading the organisation during COVID (amongst all the normal advocacy they do) with so much uncertainty and continuing changes would have been challenging, but she seemed to make it look so easy. The way she could connect with members at all membership levels is a

testament to her ability to be both professional and personal all at the same time. It was a privilege for myself and I am sure many others here today to have had the opportunity to be involved in ICPA while you have been at the helm. The whole of ICPA has gained so much from your time as its leader and there is no doubt that the 2023/24 Federal Council will benefit from the foundations you leave behind. I would also like to say farewell to those councillors hanging up their boots and congratulations to all new and re-standing executives and councillors on your election this year and wish you all the best for the coming 12 months and looking forward to being part of this amazing organisation with you all.

The 2023 State Conference 'Launching Futures since 1972' was held successfully at Woomera in the state North West on the 23rd of March, hosted by the North West Branch and convened by Candice Brown and Petie Rankin. Planning went smoothly and things were going along swimmingly until eleven days before conference when my husband Daniel had a motorbike accident that left him with a badly broken tibia, a subsequent plane ride to Adelaide and a 3-week stint in hospital. Despite my best efforts and many sleepless nights trying to work out if I would be able to make it to Woomera, I made the difficult but right at the time for our family and business to hand over the reins to Hollie Williams, Lisa Slade and Jill Greenfield and stay in Adelaide with Daniel. Hollie was a wonderful and steady support for me leading up to and throughout the course of the day and I am very sure that Jill and Lisa, despite being Immediate Past President and Vice President respectively, didn't think they would be chairing another state conference, but with grace and composure they took over for me and chaired what was to be another excellent conference.

The motions presented and debated were well considered and supported by the branches proposing them and apart from one which was withdrawn by the proposing branch, all were carried without opposition. All the guest speakers seemed to be a hit with members and guests and they all had a way to connect their presentations back to education and the core values of ICPA.

While I got to listen in online, I was disappointed I could not be there in person to be part of the passion and excitement that always comes from listening to engaging speakers. As always, the highlight for me is the branch presentations, which enables members and guests to see what our families have been up to for the year. Seeing our kids and families in their environments, thriving and living life to fullest is such a joy and this year those presentations were outstanding as always. Conference was finished off with a spectacular night of dining and friendship 'Under the Stars' at Arcoona Station. Many thanks to the Willis Family for sharing your special part of South Australia with everyone who attended.

Elections were held at the conclusion of conference and for the first time in a while the SA ICPA State Council is as full as it can be and it was exciting and encouraging to see so many new and returning members put up their hand to be part of council and as the year has progressed they have all been such an asset to have around and work with. Along with myself, the State Council elected at the 2023 AGM were Vice President – Kirsty Williams; Secretary – Hollie Williams; Treasurer – Jodie Keogh and Publicity Officer – Ellen Litchfield. Branch reps and councillors were Michelle Hilder, Mija Reynolds, Helen Williams, Dani Chapman, Jo Drennan, Kristina Crawford, Candice Brown, Edwina Bowie, Katrina Morris, Pamela Cuffe, Di Thomas, Stef Roeske and Jess Bell. As well as the above, the appointed positions for 2023 were: Pipeline Editor – Mija Reynolds; State Webmaster – Lisa Slade; E-Newsletter Editor – Ellen Litchfield Helen Williams; REVISE representative – Georgy Ewing OAC CGC Rep – Petie Rankin and Lone Member officer – Helen Williams.

We said thank you and farewell to outgoing councillors Linda Haydon, Amanda Michael, Louise Kholer and Penny Rasheed who had all been representatives from their branches. Penny has also been the e-newsletter editor and a guru with Mailchimp. As well as those ladies, Helen Williams stepped out of her role as Publicity Officer, but has remained on State Council as a branch representative. Helen put her hand up last year to take on the role and has always gone out of her way to make sure she did what was needed for the role. We also acknowledged and thanked Michelle Hilder, who finish up her four-year tenure as State Treasurer. A roll she

was thrust into but one she devoted her time to, and who did the most amazing job possible. We are lucky that Michelle decided to stay on as part of our State Council team as a branch representative.

We sadly farewelled two of our long-standing members of State Council this year. Firstly, Lisa Slade who has been involved in SA ICPA State Council since 2013 who in that time has been President, Vice President (twice!), and Immediate Past President. During the same time as she was on State Council, Lisa was elected to Federal Council in 2017 as Federal Treasurer and served a four-year term in that role. She then stayed on Federal Council another 12 months as Federal Vice-President. As well as that Lisa has held executive roles at branch level and always lent a hand with any fundraising and branch activities. The saying 'if you want something done ask a busy person' certainly applies to Lisa – not only did she manage her ICPA commitments with what seemed such ease, she did it while working full time and studying!

We have been very lucky that Lisa took on an off-council position to become our State Webmaster. A job she has already applied her trademark commitment to excellence to. Thanks Lisa.

Last but certainly not least we sadly said goodbye to Jill Greenfield who decided to step off State Council this year after many consecutive years volunteering for SA ICPA. She has been a councillor, treasurer, vice-president, president and immediate past president. Her dedication to the organisation and its members has been commendable and quite frankly inspirational. From attending her first State Conference in Woomera in 2001 with a toddler and a baby, to attending this year's conference in Woomera and proudly watching that toddler be our guest speaker, Jill has been a member of and involved in SA ICPA for over 20 years. Jill's leadership has been and still is a steadying presence not only during the unprecedented times of COVID but for all her time served on council and she has handled it with grace and strength. Thanks, Jill, for everything – enjoy this new chapter of your life – we already miss you.

We continue to deliver the Pipeline publication to members bi-annually and it is always wonderful to read about all the comings and goings from members. I personally think that our publication has a great mix of SA ICPA, State Council and member news and is always a pleasure to get in the mail. We sadly farewelled Lynly Kerin from her role as Editor of Pipeline when she announced her retirement in November 2022. Lynly took over the roll from Kerry Williams back in May of 2017 and has done a stellar job ever since.

We were pleased to announce that Mija Reynolds accepted our offer for her to become the editor of Pipeline. Given that she was already the layout editor it made sense for us to ask if she could combine the roles. The experience she had meant that the transition was a smooth one and she has already produced two great editions. Thank you Mija.

SA ICPA would like to acknowledge and thank The Indulkaninna Foundation for their generous donation. Their donation has been put to very good use in the form of bursaries for students, which are being utilised for wide variety of things including new laptops, online music and drama lessons, school uniforms, school camps and SPELD support lessons just to name a few. We look forward to this being an ongoing partnership and are very grateful to be considered in the philanthropic vision for their foundation.

Since this year's State Conference we have been working hard on putting together and sending out motion letters but despite follow up emails we have only received one response so far. It was disappointing that despite all our early invitations and open communication with State Ministers including the Education, Agriculture and Regional Roads ministers, that none of them found the time to attend our conference this year. It has been and continues to be something we cannot seem to overcome and it is very frustrating when you try so hard but get very little response in return. When those very Ministers are making well-publicised visits to the north of the state not long after our conference to look at some fabulous but been dead for millions of years fossils but then chose not to visit the very living and breathing little humans and those families they represent, it causes great disappointment and a big realisation that we have a big challenge ahead of us as we navigate building that relationship.

I hope to gain some advice and ideas from other states, who seem to have such a positive connection with their relevant ministers, on what we can do to improve and build this channel of communication and support so that we can see some better outcomes and responses for our members.

I wanted to finish on a personal reflection about guilt. In these past four months since Daniel's accident I have been overcome by debilitating waves of guilt around me not being able to fulfill my volunteer roles to the best of my ability and not being able to dedicate the time needed to do the jobs that came with the role I signed up for. Sometimes the guilt I felt was far stronger than the gratitude I should have been feeling for the amazing people around me who were pitching in and helping. It has been a big challenge for me to overcome this but with support I have put that behind me and can appreciate and accept that the help was just that – help. Good old fashioned lend a hand to someone in need help. It is now even more important that SA ICPA State Council continues to be a collaborative effort between councillors and members and that no one job is too big for someone to manage. I think going forward as volunteer numbers dwindle across the whole country, this is the approach that is going to be needed to enable organisations like ICPA to continue to be viable. Coming together to share a job or a work load, rather than pushing ourselves to the point where we just cannot or do not want to do something will be the clearest pathway to stability and success. Volunteers are the legends that keep our small communities and organisations going and we need to do all we can to make sure that we value and nurture those who give their precious time, so that they keep putting their hands up to support those who live their lives and educate their children in rural and remote Australia.

Congratulations and thank you to Alana, Federal Council, and the NT State Council for putting on what I can only imagine will be an excellent couple of days for the 52nd Federal Conference in Darwin and for dedicating countless hours of your time to ensure that everyone has an amazing time. Last year I signed off by saying I hope to see you in Darwin but that may have jinxed me so I will just say cheers for now, enjoy conference and I hope to be able to catch up with some of you soon.